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Military Order 

of the

Loyal Legion

of the

 United States



COMMANDERY OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA.



WAR PAPER 58.

The Battle of Bull Run, July 21, 1861.



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WAR PAPERS.

58

The Battle of Bull Run, July 21, 1861.

PREPARED BY COMPANION

Brigadier-General

THOMAS M. VINCENT,

U. S. Army,

AND

READ AT THE STATED MEETING OF MARCH 1, 1905,

The Battle of Bull Run, July 21, 1861.

Commander and Companions:

There was turmoil in the political atmosphere, and, April, 1860, the National Democratic Convention assembled at Charleston, S. C. Dissensions were apparent as to congressional protection of slavery in the territories. The Southern delegates withdrew, organized a separate convention and then adjourned, May 4, to meet at Richmond, Virginia, June 11. The Northern wing adjourned to meet at Baltimore, Maryland, June 18. In May the Constitutional Union Party in Convention at Baltimore, adopted a platform evading the slavery issue; and, the same month, the National Republican Party, in Convention at Chicago, nominated Abraham Lincoln for President, and pronounced favorably as to congressional prohibition of slavery in the territories. In June the National Democratic Convention, at Baltimore, declared in favor of leaving the question of slavery to the people of the territories, or to the United States Supreme Court; and the same month the Southern Democratic National Convention declared that neither Congress, nor a territorial legislature, had the right to prohibit slavery in a territory, and that it was the duty of the Federal Government, in all its departments, to protect slavery in the territories when necessary.

The Congress of the United States met December 3, and President Buchanan submitted his message, wherein he argued adversely as to the right of secession, but expressed doubt as to the constitutional power of the Congress to make war upon a State. December 6, a select committee of 33 was appointed by the House of Representatives, to take measures

for the perpetuity of the Union; and, February 28, 1861, that body adopted the amendment offered by the committee of 33, prohibiting any interference by Congress with slavery in the States. The amendment was adopted by the Senate March 2, but failed to be adopted by the necessary number of States.

All events had tended, and now moved rapidly, to the "years of warfare and turbulence which ensued." Among them, December 20, the secession of South Carolina; December 26, the transfer of United States troops from Fort Moultrie to Fort Sumter; December 27, the seizure of Castle Pinckney and Fort Moultrie by the South Carolina authorities; December 30, the seizure of the United States Arsenal at Charleston; January 11, 1861, the surrender of Fort Sumter was demanded; and March 11 marked the adoption of the Constitution of the Confederate States of America. Thereafter States seceded rapidly; United States forts and other property were seized; a relief-ship destined for Fort Sumter was fired upon, and driven back at the entrance of Charleston Harbor; an act was passed by the Confederate Congress to provide munitions of war, and, March 6, 1861, another act to establish an army, not to exceed 100,000 men, for 12 months' service. April 13, Sumter surrendered, and on the 14th was occupied by Confederate troops. All the foregoing had resulted prior to April 15, when President Lincoln called for 75,000 militia for 3 months' service, and summoned Congress to convene July 4th.

Between April 17, when Virginia seceded, and July 21, Harper's Ferry was abandoned and burned; the United States troops had conflict with the Baltimore mob; military commands—Union and Confederate—were formed; calls made for troops; and skirmishes with other minor conflicts connected with operations, took place in Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia.

May 6, the Confederate Congress recognized the existence of a state of war between the United States and the Confederate States, and, May 7 Arlington Heights were occupied by Virginia troops—Major-General Robert E. Lee, having been, April 23, assigned to command the forces in Virginia—and that State was admitted into the Confederate States of America. May 15 Brigadier-General Joseph E. Johnston, C. S. A. was assigned to command at Harper's Ferry—there to oppose General Robert Patterson—and May 24 Brigadier-General M. L. Bonham, C. S. A., was assigned to command on the Alexandria Line, Virginia. May 24, the Federal troops crossed the Potomac into Virginia, and occupied Arlington Heights and Alexandria. May 28, Brigadier-General Irvin McDowell, U. S. A., assumed command of the Department of Northeast Virginia; and then, June 1, followed the skirmishes at Arlington Mills, and June 17, Fairfax Court House, and an action at Vienna. June 2 General Beauregard superseded Bonham in command of the Alexandria Line, and assumed command of all the Confederate forces in Prince William, Fairfax, and Loudoun Counties. July 16 the Federal Army advanced towards Manassas, and July 17 the Confederate Army retired to the line of Bull Run, which resulted as the battle-line for the first momentous contest of the Civil War.

Beauregard has said: * * * "Previously—indeed as early as the middle of June—it had become apparent to my mind that through only one course of action could there be a well grounded hope of ability, on the part of the Confederates to encounter successfully the offensive operations for which the Federal authorities were then rigorously preparing in my immediate front with so consummate a strategist and military administrator as Lieutenant-General Scott in general command at Washington, aided by his accomplished heads of the large General Staff Corps of the United States Army. This course was to make the most enterprising, warlike use of

the interior lines which we possessed, for the swift concentration at the critical instant of every available Confederate force upon the menaced position, at the risk, if need were, of sacrificing all minor places to the one clearly of major military value—there to meet our adversary so offensively as to overwhelm him under circumstances that must require immediate ability to assume the general offensive, even upon his territory; and thus conquer an early peace by a few well-delivered blows.

“My views of such import had been already earnestly communicated to the proper authorities; but about the middle of July, satisfied that McDowell was on the eve of taking the offensive against me, I dispatched [to President Davis], an aide-de-camp to urge, in substance, the necessity for the immediate concentration of the larger part of the forces of Johnston and Holmes at Manassas, so that the moment McDowell should be sufficiently far detached from Washington, I would be enabled to move rapidly round his more convenient flank upon his rear and communications, and attack him in reverse, or get between his forces, then separated, thus cutting off his retreat upon Arlington in the event of his defeat, and insuring as an immediate consequence the crushing of Patterson, the liberation of Maryland, and the capture of Washington.”

At this juncture, when the state was in combat with its own children, Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis were the Commanders-in-Chief of the Federal and Confederate Armies, respectively. Both had served in the Black Hawk War. Therein Lincoln gained practical military experience, (1) as captain of a company; (2) as private in Captain Elijah Iles's independent rangers, formed of “generals, colonels, captains, and other distinguished men from the first disbanded army”; and (3) again as private in an independent company under Captain Jacob M. Early. General Robert Anderson, of Fort Sumter fame, mustered him into the two independent

companies. With the Black Hawk service as a basis, Lincoln's subsequent study—particularly from 1861 to 1865—developed him “into a great military man that is to say a man of supreme military judgment.” We have the evidence of this in the pointed questions and memoranda which he placed before his generals.

Davis was a West Point graduate; had commanded a volunteer regiment in the Mexican War—severely wounded in a battle of that War—had been United States Secretary of War, Representative and Senator—Chairman of the Senate Military Committee; and President of a Commission created by act of Congress, to examine into the organization system of discipline, and course of instruction at the United States Military Academy. Thus he was fitted to be President of the Confederate States, with their respective state governments transferred thereto “including militia and volunteer organizations in complete working order.”

“Lincoln had to adapt the machinery of a conservative old government, some of it unsuitable, some unsound, to sudden demands for which it was not designed”; as a result valuable time was consumed. * * * “Nothing but time and experience—possibly nothing but disaster—could remove from the path of the Union President difficulties from which the Confederate President was, by his situation, entirely free. In the beginning of the war, the military advantage was on the side of the Confederates, notwithstanding the greater resources of the North, which produced their effect only as the contest was prolonged.” * * * But Lincoln, as he studied the situation, grew in firmness and hope—“with firmness in the right as God gave him to see the right,” and we have his majestic enunciations when he said to Charles Francis Adams, at London:

“You will make no admission of weakness in our Constitution, or any apprehension on the part of our government.

* * * You will in no case listen to any suggestion of compromise by this Government, under foreign auspices, with its discontented citizens." * * *

And to Minister Dayton at Paris:

"The President neither expects nor desires any intervention, nor even any favor, from the Government of France, or any other, in the emergency. If several European States should combine in that intervention, the President and the people of the United States deem the Union, which would then be at stake, worth all the cost and all the sacrifices of a contest with all the world at arms, if such a contest should prove inevitable."

In May the Confederate Government had been transferred from Montgomery to Richmond, "and the Capitals of the Union and of the Confederacy stood defiantly confronting each other." McDowell was south of the Potomac facing the opposing forces under Beauregard, whose pickets had been forced from their sight of the Capitol. General Johnston's forces, at Harper's Ferry, were to be kept engaged by Major-General Patterson, who commanded near that place.

General McDowell's Army consisted of five divisions:

Tyler's 1st, of 4 brigades—Keyes', Schenck's, W. T. Sherman's and Richardson's.

Hunter's 2d, of 2 brigades—Andrew Porter's and Burnside's.

Heintzelman's 3d, of 3 brigades—Franklin's, Willcox's and Howard's.

Runyon's 4th, of 9 regiments—not brigaded.

Dixon S. Miles' 5th, of 2 brigades—Blenker's and Davies'.

Richardson's 4th brigade of Tyler's 1st division, was attached to Miles' 5th division during the battle.

There were 10 batteries of artillery, beside 2 guns attached to infantry regiments—49 guns total—and 7 companies of regular cavalry. Of the foregoing forces, 9 of the batteries and 8 companies of infantry were regulars, and 1 small battalion

was composed of marines. The aggregate force was about 35,000 men; of that number Runyon's Fourth Division was 6 or 7 miles in rear, guarding the Alexandria road, and, though counted in the aggregate, was not embraced in McDowell's order for battle.

Beauregard's Army had the brigades of Holmes, Bonham, Ewell, D. R. Jones, Longstreet, Cocke, and Early; also 3 regiments of infantry and 3 battalions of cavalry and 6 batteries—27 guns—of artillery; an available aggregate force, on the Bull Run, of about 23,000. Johnston's Shenandoah Army had the brigades of Jackson (Stonewall), Bee, Bartow and Kirby Smith, 2 regiments of infantry, not brigaded, 1 regiment of cavalry and 5 batteries (20 guns), an aggregate of 8,340. The opposing forces, in the aggregate and parts engaged, were more nearly equal than in any other Virginia battle.

Unbounded northern enthusiasm said: "On to Richmond." It required, as we all know, four years to get there!

McDowell's army marched July 16, and the morning of the 18th found it concentrated at Centreville, about 20 miles from the Potomac, and 7 east of Manassas Junction. Beauregard's outposts with slight resistance, fell back to Bull Run. That stream, halfway between Centreville and Manassas Junction, flows southeasterly. It was a formidable line with abrupt banks, timber-fringed and with artificial defenses at the fords. The Warrenton Pike, through Centreville, leads nearly due west, crossing the stream at the Stone Bridge. The Centreville direct road to Manassas crosses at Mitchell's ford, about half a mile above Blackburn's ford. All the fords, from Union Mills on the south to the Stone Bridge on the north, were defended by Beauregard's forces, distributed by brigades, as follows: Union Mills—Ewell's and Holmes' (the Confederate right); McLean's—D. R. Jones'; Blackburn's,—Longstreet's and Early's; Mitchell's—Bonham (with

an outpost east of Bull Run); and between Mitchell's and Stone Bridge (the Confederate left), was placed Evans, with one regiment; Wheat's special battalion of infantry; 1 battery of 4 guns; and 2 companies of cavalry.

McDowell was forced to await at Centreville until the arrival of his provision train brought rations, and the delay enabled him to make a reconnoissance to the extreme left of his line, with the result that the country was not found suitable to a sudden movement of the army to turn the enemy's right flank. While he was so engaged, Tyler, July 18, made an unauthorized reconnoissance to Mitchell's and Blackburn's fords, and there engaged the Confederates. This affair was regarded by the Confederates as a serious attack, and dignified by them as the "battle of Bull Run," the engagement of the 21st being called by them the battle of Manassas. The casualties were: Federals, 1 officer and 18 enlisted killed; 1 officer and 37 enlisted wounded; 36 enlisted missing. Confederates, 15 killed, and 53 wounded, of whom several died. The Confederates were elated over the result—they thought they had repulsed a heavy attack. The Federals were correspondingly depressed. During the 19th and 20th Beauregard failed to profit by the advantage he had gained. The operations of the 18th confirmed McDowell in the belief that with his raw troops the Confederate position should be turned, instead of a front attack. During the 19th and 20th he studied the Confederate position and planned to manœuvre the enemy out of it. Beauregard did not use aggressive movements until the 21st, and then through lack of comprehension on part of his subordinates, "the effort was a complete *fiasco*, with the comical result of frightening his own troops, who, late in the afternoon, mistook the return of one of their brigades for an attack by McDowell's left, and the serious result of interfering with the pursuit after he had gained the battle of the 21st."

McDowell undertook his campaign with the understanding that Johnston should be prevented from joining Beauregard. Yet Johnston's army, 9,000 strong, did join—Bee's brigade and Johnston, in person, arriving the morning of the 20th, the remainder about noon of the 21st. McDowell's enforced delay at Centreville enabled him to provision his troops and gain information necessary to base an excellent plan of attack; but it proved fatal by affording time for a junction of the opposing forces. McDowell's plan of battle promulgated on the 20th, was to turn the enemy's left, force him from his defensive position, and, "if possible, destroy the railroad leading from Manassas to the valley of Virginia, where the enemy has a large force." When the promulgation was made McDowell suspected, but did not know, that Johnston had joined Beauregard!

According to the plan of battle, Miles' Fifth Division was to remain at Centreville—Richardson's brigade of Tyler's division to form part of it; also a strong artillery force. This combined force was to be the reserve, and was to prepare defensive works at Centreville and threaten Blackburn's ford. Tyler's First Division was to move at 2.30 A. M., threaten the Stone Bridge, and open fire upon it at daybreak. The demonstration was to be vigorous; its first purpose being to divert attention from the movements of the turning column. As soon as Tyler's troops had cleared the way, Hunter's Second Division, followed by Heintzelman's Third Division was to move to a point on the Warrenton Pike, 1 or 2 miles east of Centreville, there turn to the right by a country-road, cross the Run at Sudley Springs, come down upon the flank and rear of the enemy at the Stone Bridge, and force him to open the way for Tyler's Division to cross there and attack fresh and in full force. Tyler's start was so late, and his advance so slow, as to hold Hunter and Heintzelman 2 or 3 hours on the mile or two of the turnpike between their camps and

the point where they were to turn off for the flank march. This delay, and the fact that the flank march proved difficult, and some 12 miles instead of 6 as was expected, were of serious moment. The flanking column did not arrive at Sudley's Springs until 9.30 instead of 7. The long interrupted march tired out the troops, and the delay gave the enemy time to discover the turning movement. Tyler's operations against the Stone Bridge were feeble and ineffective. By 8 o'clock Evans—on the Confederate left—felt that he was in no danger in front, and perceived the movement to turn his position—the left of the Confederate line—guarding the point where the Warrenton turnpike the great highway to the battlefield, crossed Bull Run, the Confederate line of defense. He did not have instructions, in the emergency, to guide him, but he did not hesitate. Reporting his information and purpose to Cocke, the adjoining commander, and leaving 4 companies of infantry to deceive and hold Tyler at the bridge, Evans, before 9 o'clock, turned his back upon the point he was set to guard, marched a mile away, and seizing the high ground to the north of Young's Branch of Bull Run, formed line of battle, at right angle to his former line, his left resting on the Sudley Springs road, by which Burnside with the head of his turning column was approaching—thus covering the Warrenton turnpike and opposing a determined front to the Federal advance upon the Confederate left and rear. In his rear to the south lay the valley of Young's Branch, and rising from that was the higher ridge or plateau, on which the Robinson and Henry houses were situated, and on which the main action took place in the afternoon. Burnside, finding Evans across his path, promptly formed line of battle and attacked about 9.45 A. M. Hunter, the division commander, who was at the head of Burnside's brigade directing the formation of the first skirmish line, was severely wounded and taken to the rear. Evans not only repulsed but pursued the attack-

ing troops. Andrew Porter's brigade of Hunter's division followed Burnside closely, and came to his support. In the meantime Bee had formed a Confederate line of battle with his and Bartow's brigades of Johnston's army, on the Henry house plateau, a stronger position than the one held by Evans, and Bee desired Evans to fall back to that line; but Evans—probably feeling bound to cover the Warrenton Pike, and hold it against Tyler, as well as against the flanking column—insisted that Bee should move across the valley to his support, which was done.

After Bee joined Evans the preliminary battle continued to rage upon the ground chosen by the latter. The opposing forces were Burnside's and Porter's brigades with one regiment of Heintzelman's division on the Federal side; and Evans', Bee's, and Bartow's brigades on the Confederate side. The Confederates were dislodged and driven back to the Henry house plateau, where Bee had previously formed line and where what Beauregard called, "the mingled remnants of Bee's, Bartow's and Evans' commands" were reformed under cover of Stonewall Jackson's brigade of Johnston's army.

The time of this repulse, as proved by Jackson, was before 11.30 A. M., and this is confirmed by Beauregard's official report, made at the time. Sherman and Keyes had not anything to do with it; they did not begin to cross Bull Run until noon. Thus after nearly two hours' stubborn fighting with Johnston's forces—which General Scott had promised should be kept away—McDowell won the first advantage; but Johnston had cost him dearly.

During all this time Johnston and Beauregard had been waiting near Mitchell's Ford,—not remote from Miles' Fifth Division, on the Federal left flank—for the development of the attack that had been ordered by their right upon McDowell at Centreville. The gravity of the situation, upon their left, had not dawned upon them. What might the result have

been if the Federal column had not been detained by Tyler's delay in moving out in the early morning, or if Johnston's army, to which Bee, Bartow, and Jackson belonged, had not arrived?

The heavy firing on the left soon diverted Johnston and Beauregard from their intended offensive movement with their right—against Miles on the Federal left—and decided them, as Beauregard has said, “to hurry up all available reinforcements, including the reserves that were to have moved upon Centreville, to our left, and fight the battle out in that quarter.” Thereupon Beauregard ordered “Ewell, Jones and Longstreet to make a strong demonstration all along their front on the other [Federal] side of Bull Run, and ordered the reserves—Holmes’ brigade, with 6 guns and Early’s brigade—to move swiftly to the left”; and he and Johnston set out at full speed for the point of conflict, which they reached while Bee was attempting to rally his men, about Jackson’s brigade on the Henry house plateau. McDowell reached the scene of conflict somewhat earlier than Johnston and Beauregard, and, seeing the enemy driven across Young’s Branch Valley and behind the Warrenton turnpike, at once ordered Tyler to “press the attack” at the Stone Bridge. Tyler received the order by 11 o’clock, and it was upon his division that McDowell relied for the decisive fighting of the day. He knew that the march of the turning column would be fatiguing and when by a sturdy fight, it had cleared the Warrenton turnpike it had, in fact, done more than its fair portion of the work. Tyler knew, from the plan of battle, that when Hunter and Heintzelman had attacked the enemy in the vicinity of the Stone Bridge, “he was to force the passage of Bull Run at that point and attack the enemy in flank.” Soon after McDowell reached the front, Burnside said to him that his brigade was out of ammunition and that he wished to withdraw to refit and fill his cartridge-boxes.

McDowell reluctantly consented and the brigade which had done so nobly, took no further part in the fight. After ordering Tyler to press his attack and sending orders to the rear of the turning column to hurry forward, McDowell, like Beauregard, rushed in person into the conflict, and by force of circumstance became for the time the commander of the turning column and the force actually engaged, rather than the commander of the whole army. With the exception of sending his adjutant-general to find and hurry Tyler forward, his subsequent orders were mainly, or wholly, to the troops under his own observation. It was not until 12 o'clock that Sherman received orders from Tyler to cross the stream which he did at a ford above the Stone Bridge, going to the assistance of Hunter. Sherman reported to McDowell on the field, and joined in the pursuit of Bee's forces across the valley of Young's Branch. Keyes' brigade, accompanied by Tyler in person, followed across the stream where Sherman forded, but without uniting with the other forces on the field, made a feeble advance upon the slope of the plateau toward the Robinson house, and then about 2 o'clock filed off by flank to its left, and, sheltered by the east front of the bluff that forms the plateau, marched down Young's Branch, out of sight of the enemy, and took no further part in the engagement. McDowell did not know where the brigade was, nor did he then know that Schenck's brigade of Tyler's division did not cross the Run. McDowell as he passed to the front, had given orders for it to remain on the east side of the Run to support Carlisle's battery—this about 1 P. M. The brigade from the time its position at the Stone Bridge was reached, did excellent work, both north and south of the Warrenton Pike, through the service of skirmishers and artillery.

The line taken up by Stonewall Jackson upon which Bee, Bartow and Evans rallied on the southern part of the plateau,

was a very strong one. The ground was high and afforded the cover of a curvilinear wood, with the concave side toward the Federal line of attack. According to Beauregard's official report, made at the time, he had upon this part of the field, at the beginning, 6,500 infantry, 13 pieces of artillery, and 2 companies of cavalry; and this line was continually reinforced from Beauregard's reserves, and by the arrival of Johnston's troops from the Shenandoah Valley.

To carry this formidable position McDowell had at hand the brigades of Franklin, Willcox, Sherman, and Porter; Palmer's battalion of regular cavalry; and Ricketts' and Griffin's regular batteries. Porter's brigade had been shaken by the morning's fight. Howard's brigade was in reserve and only came into action late in the afternoon. The men, unused to field service, and not yet over the hot and dusty march from the Potomac, had been under march since midnight. The plateau, however, was assaulted promptly, the northern part of it carried, "the batteries of Ricketts and Griffin were planted near the Henry house, and McDowell clambered to the top of that structure to get a glance at the whole field. Upon the Henry house plateau, of which the Confederates held the southern and the Federals the northern part, the tide of battle ebbed and flowed as McDowell pushed in Franklin's, Willcox's, Sherman's, Porter's, and at last Howard's brigades; and as Beauregard put into action reserves which Johnston sent from the right, and reinforcements which he hurried from the Shenandoah Valley, as they arrived by trains. Beauregard has said that, on the plateau the disadvantage of his "smooth-bore guns was reduced by the shortness of range." The short range was due to the Federal advance, and the several struggles for the plateau were at close quarters and gallant on both sides. The batteries of Ricketts and Griffin, by their fine discipline, wonderful daring, and matchless skill, were the prime features of the fight. The battle

was not lost till they were lost. When in their advanced and perilous position and just after their infantry supports had been driven off the slopes, a fatal mistake occurred. A regiment of infantry came out of the wood on Griffin's right, and as he was in the act of opening upon it with canister, he was deterred by the assurance of the chief of artillery that it "was a regiment sent by Heintzelman to support the battery." A moment more and the doubtful regiment proved its identity by a deadly volley, and "every cannoneer was cut down, and a large number of horses killed, leaving the battery—which was without support save in name—perfectly helpless." The effect upon Ricketts was equally fatal. He, desperately wounded, and Ramsey, his lieutenant, killed, lay in the wreck of the battery! Beauregard speaks of his last advance on the plateau as "leaving in our (Confederate) final possession the Robinson and Henry houses, with most of Ricketts' and Griffin's batteries, the men of which were mostly shot down where they bravely stood by their guns." The New York Fire Zouaves, who had been supporting Griffin's battery, fled to the rear in utter confusion. As said by Sherman: "Here, about 3.30 P. M., began the scene of confusion and disorder that characterized the remainder of the day."

About this time McDowell's adjutant-general rode to Burnside's brigade and stated to Burnside the condition of affairs, with the suggestion that he form and move his brigade to the front. Returning he met Barnard, McDowell's chief engineer, and as the battle seemed to both of them to be going against the Federals, a note was sent to Miles—at the time near Centreville—"to move two of his brigades up to the Stone Bridge, and telegraph to Washington to forward all the troops that could be spared."

After the arrival of Howard's brigade, McDowell for the last time pressed up the slope to the plateau, forced back the Confederate line and regained possession of the Henry and

Robinson houses, also the lost batteries. But there were no longer cannoneers to man, or horses to move, these guns that had done so much. By the arrival upon this part of the field, 3.30 P. M., of his own reserves and Kirby Smith's brigade of Johnston's army, Beauregard extended his left to outflank McDowell's shattered, shortened, and disconnected line; and the Federals left the field about 4.30. Until then they had fought wonderfully well for raw troops. There were no fresh forces on the field to encourage or support them, and the men seemed seized simultaneously by the conviction that it was no use to do anything more and they might as well start home. Cohesion was lost, the organizations, with some exceptions being disintegrated, and the men walked off. There was no special excitement except that resulting from the frantic efforts of officers to stop men, who paid little or no attention to what was said. On the high ground by the Matthews' house, about where Evans had taken position in the morning to check Burnside, McDowell and his staff aided by other officers, made a desperate but futile effort to arrest the masses, and form them into line. Arnold's battery as it came by was advised to unlimber and make a stand as a rallying-point. That was done, Arnold saying that he was in fair condition and ready to fight as long as there was any fighting to be done. But all efforts failed. The stragglers moved passed the guns, in spite of all that could be done, and Arnold joined Sykes' battalion of infantry of Porter's brigade and Palmer's battalion of cavalry—all of the regular army—to cover the rear, as the men trooped past in great disorder across Bull Run. There were some hours of daylight for the Confederates to gather the fruits of victory; but a few rounds of shell and canister checked all the pursuit that was attempted, and the occasion called for no sacrifices or valorous deeds by the stanch regulars of the rear-guard. There was no panic in the ordinary meaning of the word until the retiring soldiers, guns, wagons, con-

gressmen and carriages, were fired upon on the road east of Bull Run. Then the panic began, and the bridge over Cub Run, being rendered impassable for vehicles by a wagon that was upset upon it, utter confusion set in, pleasure carriages, gun carriages and ammunition wagons, which could not be put across the Run, were abandoned and blocked the way; and stragglers broke and threw aside their muskets, cut harness from their horses and upon them rode.

In leaving the field the men took the same routes in a general way by which they had reached it. Hence when the men of Hunter's and Heintzelman's divisions got back to Centreville, they had walked about 25 miles. That night they continued to the Potomac an additional 20 miles; so that these undisciplined and unseasoned men, within 36 hours walked 45 miles besides fighting from 10 A. M. to 4 P. M. on a hot dusty July day.

McDowell in person reached Centreville before sunset, and found there Miles' division with Richardson's brigade; three regiments of Runyon's division; and Hunt's, Tidball's, Ayres' and Greene's batteries. Subsequently there might have been added to those organizations Schenck's fine brigade; Palmer's battalion of United States cavalry, Sykes' battalion of United States Infantry; Reynold's battalion of United States Marines; also some parts from other organizations, thus making in all a very formidable force; but there was lack of food and the mass of the army was completely demoralized! Beauregard had about an equal force that had not been in the battle—of the right flank of McDowell's army with the left flank of Beauregard's army—consisting of the brigades of Ewell, Jones, and Longstreet, and some troops of other brigades. McDowell consulted the division and brigade commanders, who were at hand, as to making a stand or a retreat. The verdict favored retreat, but a decision of officers, one way or the other, was not of moment; the men had already decided for themselves,

and were streaming away to the rear, in spite of all that could be done. They had no intention or treasure in Centreville, and their hearts were not there. Their tents, provisions, baggage, and letters from home were upon the banks of the Potomac, and no power could have stopped them, short of the Camp they had left a week before. Most of them were "sovereigns in uniform," not soldiers! McDowell accepted the situation, detailed the brigades of Richardson and Blenker to cover the retreat; and the right flank of the army, a disorganized mass with some creditable exceptions, drifted, as the men pleased, away from the scene of action.

THE FIFTH DIVISION.

The 5th division, of which I was the adjutant-general, constituted the left flank of McDowell's army, and was distributed to Centreville and positions covering Union Mills, McLean's ford, Blackburn's ford, and Mitchell's ford. Blenker's and Davies' brigades were ready to march at 2 A. M., but were delayed by other troops blocking the road until soon after daylight when it was found that Davies' could pass through the fields. After the brigade moved, I accompanied Miles, the division commander, to Centreville. Lieutenant Prime, of the United States Engineer Corps, attached to the staff, was with us, and his pioneers were directed to construct a redoubt, for 2 guns, so as to resist any attempt to outflank the position from the left by movement of the enemy over the Union Mills road. Other positions were examined, and chosen for intrenchments on the road to Blackburn's ford. Blenker was then assigned to Centreville and began intrenching—one regiment being located at the former work of the enemy; one to the east of the enemy on the Warrenton Pike; and two on the heights towards Bull Run. With these last regiments were placed Tidball's and Greene's batteries. Greene, subsequently,

was removed by an order conveyed by me to him, to Richardson's position in front of Blackburn's ford, as a result of notification, from Richardson that 2,000 of the enemy were about to attack and that he required more artillery. The center of the Confederate line embraced Blackburn's and Mitchell's ford, and a hill in rear of the latter—not remote from the former—was the position from which Generals Johnston and Beauregard waited the opening of an attack by the troops of their right flank, and from which Beauregard expected a decisive victory by noon, with the result to cut the Union army from retreat to Washington. So soon as the arrangements with Blenker were completed by the division commander, I accompanied him to Richardson's position. His troops were properly placed and effectively at work—Hunt's and Edward's batteries in good locations. There was not evidence immediately about the ford of the enemy, until the first opening of the battery fire, when he fled from barns and buildings in the vicinity. The division commander then returned to Blenker's location at Centreville and found all quiet and the troops discharging their duties. After some time he returned to Richardson's command and learned that the battery ammunition was rapidly diminishing. Skirmishers were ordered forward to examine, as it was decided that if a crossing of Bull Run could be made it would be done in order to cut the line of travel used by the retreating and advancing detachments of the enemy. The skirmishers had barely entered the woods when a heavy force of the enemy was discovered behind breastworks. The skirmishers reported the enemy greatly damaged by Greene's battery. Further action at the ford was not had, as McDowell's orders were on "no account to bring on a general engagement." It was about this time that I rode to an exposed point, to observe the enemy and gain information for the division commander. In doing so I drew the fire of the enemy—his bullets passed near my

head, around my horse, and fell close to the division commander and some members of his staff. In consequence the commander said: "Gentlemen, take cover!" Earlier in the day Davies' brigade, after marching through the fields, struck the road to Blackburn's ford about one mile from Centreville, and Davies was then instructed by Miles to assume command of Richardson's brigade and take position in front of the enemy's batteries at the ford, on or near the battle-ground of the 18th; and to make a demonstration of attack in pursuance of McDowell's order. He immediately ordered forward the two 20-pounders of Hunt's battery, commanded by Edwards into an open field about 80 yards east of the Centreville road to Bull Run, and 1,500 yards from the enemy's batteries. Edwards at once commenced firing, his guns duly supported by Davies' infantry. This juncture was about 10 A. M. and about 11 A. M. I reached the ground in company with Miles after he had made some change of Davies' infantry, in order to better support the artillery and secure a more rapid movement if necessary. The artillery also was changed—4 guns were placed in the open field where Edwards had been firing. An infantry regiment remained in reserve on the Centreville road about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile in rear of the field. With the increased number of guns the artillery fire was continued. Prime, the engineer officer, has said: * * * "Richardson proceeded to make an abatis to cover a road for infantry and cavalry which should connect the right [Richardson] with the left [Davies]. This road was formed on the skirt of the wood by cutting the trees necessary for the abatis. Considerable progress was made in the construction of a battery across the road with three embrasures. This had a log revetment for the interior slope, and 10 or 12 feet of earth in front. Hunt's battery having been ordered to the left [in the open field], Greene's battery was ordered to replace it—two pieces on the right of the road, and two pieces on the left. An excellent view of the [enemy's]

artillery, cavalry and infantry as they moved either towards or from the main battle-field, the road in many places passing over cleared ground."

Davies, during the afternoon, had evidence that a large body of cavalry and infantry had attempted to take him in rear by a road which had been blocked by his pioneers felling trees. The enemy was retiring. Hunt with his howitzers, and Green and Edwards with their rifled guns, poured a heavy fire into the retreating column at a distance of $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile.

About 4 P. M. Miles gave peremptory orders to Davies to hold his position, and remain there all night. Soon thereafter I accompanied Miles *en route* to Blenker at Centreville. Not far from that place we received word that McDowell's right flank of the army had been routed, and at the same time an order from McDowell to send two brigades up the Warrenton Pike to the bridge, and to telegraph to Washington for additional troops. By Miles' order I at once rode with the order to Davies for its execution. He informed me that he could not spare his troops, and that he needed an additional regiment from the reserves as the enemy, 3,000 strong, was attempting to turn his left flank. Having satisfied myself by riding to an exposed and dangerous position, that such an attempt was progressing, I suspended the order on my own responsibility, and at once returned to Miles to report my action, which he approved. I realized the momentousness of the responsibility in suspending the order for it involved: (1) the safety of the routed right flank of the army, and (2) the safety of the left flank, as held by the 5th division troops. Had the latter failed to repulse the Confederate attack, the fear of McDowell that if the left flank was turned or forced, "the whole stream of our retreating mass would be captured or destroyed," might have proved a reality. The attack on Davies was made by a force variously estimated at 2,500 to 3,000. McDowell has said: * * * "I had felt anxious

about this road from Manassas by Blackburn's ford to Centre-ville, along this ridge, fearing that whilst we should be in force to the front, endeavoring to turn the enemy's position, we ourselves should be turned by him by this road. For if he should once obtain possession of this ridge which overlooks all the country to the west to the foot of the spurs of the Blue Ridge, we should have been irretrievably cut off and destroyed. I had therefore directed this point to be held in force, and sent an engineer officer [Prime] to extemporize some field work to strengthen the position."

* * * "By referring to the general order [for battle], it will be seen that while the operations were to go on in front, an attack was to be made at Blackburn's ford by the brigade [Richardson's] stationed there. A reference to his report and that of Major Hunt, commanding the artillery will show that this part of the plan was well and effectively carried out. It succeeded in deceiving the enemy for a considerable time, and in keeping in check a part of his force. * * * At the time of our retreat [right wing of the army], seeing great activity in this direction, much firing and columns of dust, I became anxious for this place, fearing if it were turned or forced the whole stream of our retreating mass would be captured or destroyed." * * * Davies was engaged on the left flanks of Miles' division—which included for the time Richardson's brigade—and supported Hunt's artillery. Hunt has said: "At length they [the supporting infantry], were moved to the right and left, and ordered to lie down and await the approach of the enemy, who by this time were closing up in apparently overwhelming numbers. I now directed the gunners to prepare shrapnel and canister shot, and in case the enemy persisted in his advance not to lose time in sponging pieces—for minutes were of more value than arms—but to aim low and pour in a rapid fire wherever the men were thickest or were seen advancing.

The enemy having by this time completed his preparations and driven in our skirmishers, now rushed forward and opened a heavy musketry fire on the battery, but from shortness of range, or from aiming upwards as they ascended the ravine, their shot mostly passed over us. The command was then given the battery to commence firing. Under the directions of Lieutenants Platt and Thompson, second artillery, and Edwards, third artillery, commanding sections, the most rapid, well sustained and destructive fire I have ever witnessed was now opened. The men took full advantage of the permission to omit sponging. Yet no accident occurred from it. The guns were all of large caliber (two 20-pounder Parrott rifle guns, and four light 12-pounders), and they swept the field with a perfect storm of canister. No troops could stand it, and the enemy broke and fled in every direction, taking refuge in the woods and ravines; and in less than fifteen minutes not a living man could be seen on the ground which so recently had swarmed with them. The infantry regiments had not found it necessary to fire a single shot."

After I had informed Miles that a brigade could not be furnished by Davies, we joined Blenker and moved his brigade up the Warrenton Pike, and placed it there to prevent the advance of the enemy, and protect the retreat of the right wing of the army—the great mass moving rapidly in wild confusion, but few in connected bodies. After Blenker's brigade had been well placed, I returned with Miles to Centreville; and then the brigades of Davies and Richardson were ordered to fall back from their fronts on Bull Run to the Centreville heights whereat with their artillery they were placed in position. They constituted a formidable force as already stated—all in complete readiness for effective defense, and not in the least affected by the routed right wing panic, which was so terrific that whilst I was under orders from McDowell, removing an ammunition train from a dangerous

position to a place of safety I had to direct the drivers to gather their horses, close up the wagons and then drive, under whip, through the disordered mass, which as it crowded the road across which the train had to pass, could not be stopped either by force or entreaty. The retreat continued until 9 P. M.

After Napoleon's soldiers had been overwhelmed by the Austrian troops, he addressed them saying: "I am displeased with you. You have not evinced discipline or valor. You have allowed yourselves to be driven from positions where a handful of resolute men might have arrested an army. You are no longer French soldiers. Chief-of-Staff, cause it to be written on their standards. They are no longer of the Army of Italy." In tears the battered veterans replied: * * * "Try us once more. Place us in the front rank of danger, and see if we do not belong to the Army of Italy. In the next battle they were placed in the van and made good their pledge by rolling back the great Austrian Army." It is safe to say that the uninstructed, routed, and panicstricken "citizens in uniform" of McDowell's army, did not say "try us once more!" Instead, they quietly with patriotic and heroic determination, enlisted under future calls, by Father Abraham, for troops; by act became true soldiers, purified by fire and blood, many so serving to the end of the war. Then they could well ask: Did I not belong to McDowell's army, and thereafter to the Grand Army of the Union?

With truth it has been said that "Christianity can easily be shaken out of souls which have not been made firm by pain, and tempered like fine steel in the furnace of renunciation." It is equally true that in the *inferno* of battle, the soul of a man, not tempered by education as a soldier and thus made firm, falls prey to fear at the critical moment when courage and valor are of supreme importance.

Early the morning of July 27, there was distress in Wash-

ington. The citizens were alarmed and excited, and to add to the terror of the day, the retreating mass began to arrive. They appeared as disorderly mobs—in squads, companies, and as stragglers. Even the War Department was alarmed, as evidenced by the following telegrams:

“WAR DEPARTMENT, *July 22.*

“McDowell is sending his retreating army to the Potomac. Allow me to suggest that you man the forts and prevent soldiers from passing over to the city; their arrival here would produce a panic and cause more trouble.”

“THOMAS A. SCOTT,
“*Assistant Secretary of War.*”

Sherman, in the absence of General Mansfield to whom the foregoing was addressed, replied:

“FORT CORCORAN, *July 22.*

“*Adjutant General:*

“I have this moment ridden in [with] I hope the rear men of my brigade, which in common with our whole army, has sustained a terrible defeat, and has degenerated into an armed mob.

“I know not if I command but at this moment I will act as such, and shall consider as addressed to me the dispatch of the Secretary of this date.

“I propose to strengthen Fort Corcoran, Fort Bennett, the redoubt on Arlington road, and the block-houses; and to aid me in stopping the flight, I ask you to order the ferry to transport no one across without my orders or those of some superior.

“W. T. SHERMAN,
“*Colonel, Commanding.*”

Relative to the battle we find the following expressions:

“It was the best planned and worst fought of any during the Civil War. A fine organization of excellent material and plenty of courage; but no cohesion, little discipline and no respect for authority, all of which are the very foundation of

successful war. Both armies were fairly defeated, without knowing it. Whichever had stood the other would have run." [General W. T. Sherman.]

"If the tactics of the Federals had been equal to their strategy we should have been beaten. If, instead of being brought into action in detail their troops had been formed into two lines, with a proper reserve and had assailed Bee and Jackson in that order, the two Southern brigades must have been swept from the field in a few minutes, or enveloped." [General Joseph E. Johnston, C. S. A.]

President Davis "seems to have forgotten what was as well known then as now, that our army was more disorganized by victory than that of the United States by defeat." [General Johnston.]

"The victory was as complete as one gained in an open country, by infantry and artillery can be. Our cavalry pursued as far as they could effectively; but when they encountered the main column [on the Warrenton Pike], after dispersing and capturing little parties and stragglers they could make no impression." [General Johnston.]

"At 4.40, when the retreat of the enemy toward Centreville began, I sent orders to Brigadier-General Bonham * * * to march with his own and Longstreet's brigade * * * by the quickest route to the turnpike to intercept the retreat of the Federal troops. But he found so little appearance of rout in those troops [Miles' Fifth Division], as to make the execution of his instructions seem impracticable." [General Johnston.]

"After the rout, having been ordered by General Johnston in the direction of Centreville in pursuit, these brigades advanced nearly to that place, when night and darkness intervening, General Bonham thought it proper to direct his own brigade and that of General Longstreet back to Bull Run." [General Beauregard.]

Reasons why the Confederates did not advance on Washington:

By General Johnston: "The apparent firmness of the United States troops at Centreville, who had not been engaged, which checked our pursuit; the strong forces occupying the works at Georgetown, Arlington and Alexandria; the certainty, too, that General Patterson, if needed, would reach Washington with his army of 30,000 men sooner than we could, and the condition and inadequate means of the army in ammunition, provisions and transportation, prevented any serious thought of advancing against the Capital. It is certain that the fresh troops within the works were in number quite sufficient for their defense. If not, General Patterson's army would certainly reinforce them soon enough."

By General Beauregard: * * * "In conclusion it is proper that my countrymen should be made acquainted with some of the sufficient causes that prevented the advance of our forces and prolonged vigorous pursuit of the enemy to and beyond the Potomac. The War Department has been fully advised long since of all of those causes, some of which only are proper to be here communicated. An army which had fought as ours on that day, against uncommon odds, under a July sun, most of the time without water and without food except a hastily snatched scanty meal at dawn, was not in condition for the toil of an eager effective pursuit of an enemy immediately after the battle." * * *

"As it was * * * that is the concentration of the Shenandoah forces with mine (wrung later than the eleventh hour through the alarm over the march upon Richmond, and discountenanced again nervously at the twelfth hour, by another alarm as to how the 'enemy may vary his plans' in consequence), followed by the defeat of the main Federal forces—nevertheless the army remained rooted in the spot, although we had more than 15,000 troops who had been not

at all or but little in the battle and were perfectly organized, while the remaining commands in the high spirit of victory could have been reorganized at the tap of the drum, and many with improved captured arms and equipments." * * *

By President Jefferson Davis: * * * "It could not be expected that any success obtainable on the battle-field would enable our forces to carry the fortifications on the Potomac, garrisoned and within supporting distance of fresh troops; nor, after the actual battle and victory, did the generals on the field propose an advance on the Capital, nor does it appear that they have since believed themselves in a condition to attempt such a movement." * * *

By General Imboden: * * * "The uninformed, North and South, have wondered why Johnston and Beauregard did not follow on to Washington. General Johnston, in his "Narrative," has clearly answered that question. It was simply impossible. We had neither the food nor transportation at Manassas necessary to a forward movement. This subject was the cause of sharp controversy between our commanding generals at Manassas on the one hand, and Mr. Davis and his Secretary of War, Mr. Benjamin, on the other. There was a disposition in the quartermaster's and commissary departments at Richmond to deny the extent of the destitution of our army immediately after the battle. To ascertain the exact facts of the case, General Johnston organized a board of officers to investigate and report the condition of the transportation and the commissariat on the 21st of July, and their daily condition for two weeks thereafter. That board was composed of Lieutenant-Colonel Robert B. Lee (cousin of General R. E. Lee), representing the commissary department, Major (afterward Major-General), W. L. Cabell, representing the quartermaster's department, and myself from the line. My associates on this board were old United States army officers of acknowledged ability and large experience. We

organized in August, and made an exhaustive investigation and detailed report. I have a distinct recollection that we found that on the morning of the battle there was not at Manassas one full day's ration for the combined armies of Johnston and Beauregard, and that on no single day for the succeeding two weeks was there as much as three days' supply there. We found that there were not wagons and teams enough at any time to have transported three days' supplies for the troops if they had been put in motion away from the railroad. We found that for weeks preceding the 21st of July General Beauregard had been urgent and almost importunate in his demand on the quartermaster and commissary generals at Richmond for adequate supplies. We found that Colonel Northrop, the commissary general, had not only failed to send forward adequate supplies for such an emergency as arose when General Johnston brought his army from the valley, but that he had interfered with and interdicted the efforts of officers of the department who were with General Beauregard to collect supplies from the rich and abundant region lying between the hostile armies. After reporting the facts, we unanimously concurred in the opinion that they proved the impossibility of a successful and rapid pursuit of the defeated enemy to Washington. This report, elaborately written out and signed, was forwarded to Richmond, and in a few days returned by Mr. Judah P. Benjamin, Secretary of War, with an indorsement to the effect that the Board had transcended its powers by expressing an opinion as to what the facts did or did not show, and sharply ordered us to strike out all that part of the report, and send only the facts ascertained by us. We met and complied with this order, though indignant at the reprimand, and returned our amended report. This was the last I ever heard of it. It never saw daylight. Who suppressed it I do not know."

After the Southern delegates of the Democratic National

Convention, at Charleston, S. C., April, 1860, withdrew, formed another convention and adjourned to meet in Richmond June 11, 1860; the movement alarmed Alexander Hamilton Stevens, of Georgia, who said: "The leaders intended from the beginning to rule or ruin. * * * Envy, hate, jealousy, spite—these made war in Heaven, which made devils of angels, and the same passions will make devils of men. The secession movement was instigated by nothing but bad passions. Patriotism, in my opinion had no more to do with it than the love of God had with the other revolt." And after the adjournment of the Richmond convention, he added: "Men will be cutting one another's throats in a little while. In less than twelve months we shall be in a war, and that the bloodiest in history. Men seem to be utterly blinded to the future." His words were prophetic! With Bull Run the threshold of the great war was passed—the struggle was continued and marked by the fire of guns, the flash of the sabre, the thrust of the bayonet—coupled with blood and mourning. Three years afterwards the gloom and sadness of the early period became intensified, and July 7, 1864, President Lincoln promulgated, as expressive of the sense of the Congress of the United States, a concurrent resolution of the Senate and House requesting that a day of humiliation and prayer be fixed, so that loyal and abiding citizens might convene at their usual places of worship to supplicate the Almighty. The supplications of the people, offered to the Supreme Commander of the world: That the Civil War might be suppressed and the supremacy of the Constitution and laws of the United States might be established throughout all the States; that we might not be destroyed as a people, among the family of Nations; and that the effusion of blood might be stayed, and unity and fraternity restored throughout our borders, were answered. Within nine months the channel of peace was opened at Appomattox on April 9,

1865, by the illustrious chieftains Grant and Lee; and the example of their armies was soon followed by the other contending forces. "The raging war that had divided the country had lulled, and private grief was hushed by the grandeur of the result."

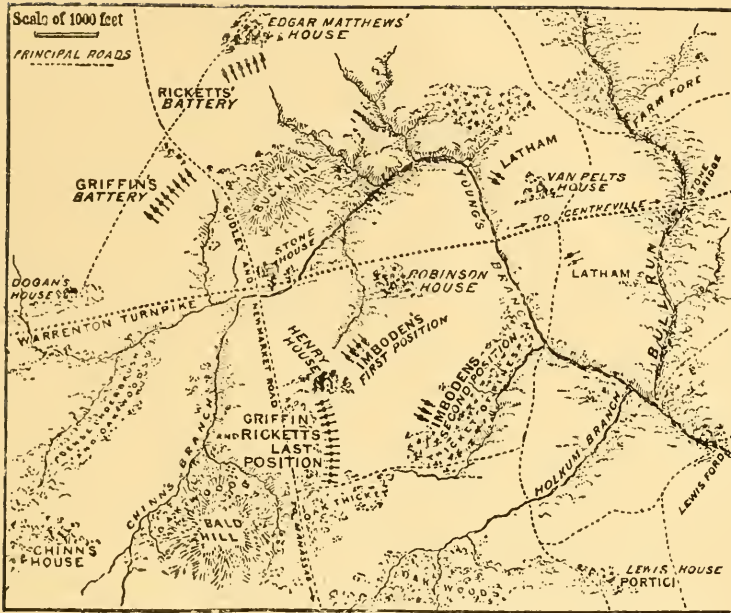
The stupendous struggle from 1861 to 1865, involved from first to last Union and Confederate forces numbering 3,700,000, and witnessed the wealth of the country lavished like water. Further contributions were not longer to be made to distorted features, ghastly ruins, and "the hidden anguish in the harvest of horror breathing from the silent ground." The blood of the land was to course anew—to mark the activities of *life*; and as a reward the now inseparably united North and South are harvesting the unbounded blessing of peace, with unsurpassed prosperity and greatness.

Appendix.

References: "Battles and Leaders of the Civil War." Therein has been published "McDowell's Advance to Bull Run," by Major-General James B. Fry. From that paper the salient facts connected with the advance and the attack by the Federal right upon the Confederate left, have been used almost in the words of Fry, who was the adjutant general of McDowell's army. Accordingly he spoke from personal observation and the official reports.

Records of the Union and Confederate armies. Series I, Vol. II, pages 314-15-16-17; followed by sub-reports.

The maps A and B herewith, will prove valuable in connection with plates III and V, War Atlas, Union and Confederate Armies, 1861-1865.



MAP B. SUPPLEMENTARY TO A.

Loss of Federal Army: killed, 460; wounded, 1,124; captured or missing, 1,312. Grand total, 2,896.

Loss of Confederate Army: killed, 387; wounded, 1,582; captured or missing, 13. Grand total, 1,982.

Federal Army crossed Bull Run with 895 officers; 17,676 rank and file; 24 pieces of artillery.

Confederate Army of Potomac, rank and file engaged, total, 9,713; Army of the Shenandoah, rank and file engaged, total, 8,340. Grand total, both armies, 18,053; with 17 field guns.

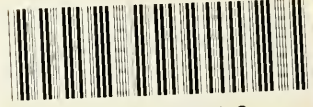


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